

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8939
INFO DEPARTMENT OF LABOR IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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TAGS: ELAB, SHUM, CI
SUBJECT: TRADE UNION FREEDOM: GOC OUSTS MARITIME LEADER

REFS: (A) SANTIAGO 2316 (B) STATE 080019 (C) SANTIAGO 2064
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DEPARTMENT PASS SUBSTANCE TO AFL-CIO AND AIFLD

1. SUMMARY: THE GOC'S LONG EFFORT TO OUST EDUARDO RIOS AS HEAD OF FEBACH AND COMACH IS NEAR SUCCESS. THERE REMAINS A SHRED OF LEGAL RECOURSE. BUT DEMOCRATIC LABOR LEADERS ARE CONVINCED THAT RIOS' SURVIVAL, AND THAT OF OTHER "DINAMICOS" DOWN THE LINE, DEPENDS ON BROADER AND MORE VOCAL LOCAL OPPOSITION TO GOC LABOR POLICIES AND ON STRONGER MEASURES OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR SUPPORT. WITH RESPECT TO THE LATTER, RIOS DEPARTS APRIL 19 FOR THE US AND WILL THEN TRAVEL TO STOCKHOLM. INTERNALLY THE "DINAMICOS", AND SOME OTHER ELECTED LEADERS, HAVE ASKED THE GOC FOR PERMISSION TO HOLD THEIR OWN MAY DAY RALLY, AND THE "DINAMICOS" ANNOUNCED APRIL 12 PLANS TO ORGANIZE A NEW CONFEDERATION OF INDEPENDENTWORKERS. THE GOC, POINTING

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TO COMMUNISTS AMONG THE PETITIONERS FOR THE SEPARATE MAY DAY RALLY, WOULD LIKE TO DISCREDIT THE "DINAMICOS" AS MOVING CLOSER TO THE MARXISTS. RIOS AND OTHERS DO NOT EXCLUDE COOPERATION WITH ELECTED MARXIST LEADERS ON SOME ISSUES, BUT THEY REALIZE THAT THEIR SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON SUPPORT FROM THE AFL-CIO. END SUMMARY.

2. EFFORTS TO OUST RIOS: ON MARCH 3, THE ACTING MINISTER OF LABOR ALFONSO SERRANO SIGNED A DECREE PLACING FOUR PERSONS ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE BAY EMPLOYEES FEDERATION (FEBACH). RIOS WENT TO COURT (REF C). ON APRIL 5, THE PROVINCIAL INSPECTOR OF LABOR ORDERED RIOS TO COMPLY WITH THE MINISTERIAL DIRECTIVE AND INSTALL THE POLITICALLY PRO-GOVERNMENT WORKERS ON HIS BOARD OF DIRECTORS. RIOS REFUSED. ON APRIL 11, THE INSPECTOR RECOGNIZED OFFICIALLY THAT THE FEBACH EXECUTIVE BOARD HAD BEEN RECONSTITUTED, WITH RIOS, LUIS TAPIA AND CALROS SALAS, THE FORMER PRESIDENT, SECRETARY AND TREASURER LOSING THESE POSITIONS AND BECOMING SIMPLE BOARD MEMBERS. THE GOVERNMENT NAMED GUILLERMO PALACIOS OF ANTOFAGASTA AS THE NEW PRESIDENT OF FEBACH. NO LONGER HEAD OF FEBACH, RIOS WOULD SOON LOSE HIS POSITION AS PRESIDENT OF THE MARITIME WORKERS CONFEDERATION (COMACH).

3. RIOS REFUSED TO TURN OVER THE UNION HEADQUARTERS TO THE GOVERNMENT DESIGNATED BOARD. HE WENT BACK TO COURT ARGUING THAT HIS ORIGINAL COMPLAINT HAD NOT YET BEEN DECIDED AND THEREFORE THE INSPECTOR IMPROPERLY RECOGNIZED THE GOC APPOINTEES. A LABOR COURT JUDGE APPARENTLY AGREED AND ISSUED ON APRIL 12 AN INJUNCTION PREVENTING THE NEW OFFICERS FROM TAKING OVER THE UNION. BUT, ON APRIL 18, THE LABOR COURT SUDDENLY WITHDREW ITS INJUNCTION STATING THAT IT WAS NOT THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HEAR THE CASE. THE GOC MEN NOW HAVE ACCESS TO THE UNION FUNDS AND ACCOUNTS. RIOS' ORIGINAL CHALLENGE TO THE MINISTER OF LABOR'S ORDER REMAINS PENDING, HOWEVER IN THE CIVIL COURTS.

4. RIOS LOOKS FOR OUTSIDE HELP. FOR AT LEAST TWO MONTHS NOW RIOS HAS BEEN CONVINCED THAT HIS SURVIVAL AS HEAD OF FEBACH AND COMACH DEPENDS ON INCREASED AND STRONGER EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT. FROM US LABOR RIOS WOULD LIKE A ONE-TIME REFUSAL TO UNLOAD A CHILEAN SHIP. HE THINKS THAT ACTION OF THIS TYPE (RATHER THAN MORE LETTERS AND TELEGRAMS) IS NECESSARY TO MAKE THE GOC STEP BACK AND REASSESS. AT RIOS' REQUEST THE EMBASSY CONVEYED THIS MESSAGE TO THE AFL-CIO IN MARCH. RIOS IS TRAVELING TO THE US TODAY (APRIL 19) AND WILL DISCUSS THE PROBLEM DIRECTLY WITH TEDDY GLEASON AND OTHER AFL-CIO OFFICIALS. HE WILL THEN GO TO STOCKHOLM AT THE INVITATION OF THE NORDIC COMMISSION.

5. INTERNAL "DINAMICO" ACTION. ON APRIL 12, THE DAY AFTER THE GOC'S OUSTING OF RIOS FROM THE FEBACH PRESIDENCY, THE "GROUP OF TEN" HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE. RIOS,

APEAKING FOR THE GROUP, CRITICIZED THE GOC FOR HARASSING DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONISM, BOTH BY REMOVING AUTHENTIC LEADERS (E.G. FORMER PRESIDENT OF STATE BANK WORKERS, ANDRES DE CAMPO AND FORMER PRESIDENT OF FENSA-MADEMSA EMPLOYEES UNION, JUAN MANUAL SEPULVEDA) AND BY ENCOURAGING PARALLEL TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS. RIOS REPEATED DINAMICO DEMANDS FOR TRADE UNION RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS AND SAID THAT HE WOULD HEAD AN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE TO ESTABLISH A NEW CONFEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT WORKERS. ACCORDING TO RIOS THIS NEW LABOR CENTRAL WILL BE OPEN ONLY TO ORGANIZATIONS WITH ELECTED LEADERS AND WHICH ARE FIGHTING FOR RESTORATION OF TRADITIONAL TRADE UNION FREEDOMS.

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6. EARLIER, ON APRIL 7, THE "GROUP OF TEN" HAD SENT A PETITION TO THE MILITARY GOVERNOR OF GREATER SANTIAGO ASKING PERMISSION TO HOLD THEIR OWN MAY DAY RALLY. OTHER ELECTED LEADERS, INCLUDING SOME COMMUNISTS, ALSO SIGNED THE PETITION. LABOR MINISTER VASCO COSTA HAS USED THIS PRIVATELY AS "EVIDENCE" THAT THE "DINAMICOS" ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH MARXIST LABOR LEADERS.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8940
INFO DEPARTMENT OF LABOR IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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DEPARTMENT PASS SUBSTANCE TO AFL-CIO AND AIFLD

7. COMMENT: THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE GOC WITH THE "DINAMICOS" HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY STRAINED OVER THE PAST YEAR. THREE OF THE ORIGINAL "TEN" HAVE LOST THEIR POSITIONS IN RECENT MONTHS. THERE HAVE BEEN RECURRENT THREATS TO REMOVE OTHERS. RIOS, AS THE HEAD OF THE GROUP AND THE MOST OUTSPOKEN OF THE "DINAMICOS", IS A PARTICULAR TARGET. THE GOC HAS BEEN CONSTRAINED IN MOVING AGAINST RIOS AND OTHERS IN PART BY FEAR OF RETALIATORY ACTION BY THE US LABOR MOVEMENT. IN THE RIOS CASE THE GOC HAS NOW APPARENTLY DECIDED THAT THE RISKS ARE NOT TOO GREAT. IF THE GOC SUCCEEDS IN OUSTING RIOS, WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT INTERNATIONAL LABOR PROTEST, MOVES AGAINST OTHER "DINAMICOS" WILL BECOME MORE LIKELY.

8. THE PROPOSED NEW CONFEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT WORKERS MAY NEVER GET OFF THE GROUND. HOWEVER, INTERNALLY IT COULD PROVIDE RIOS A BASE OUTSIDE THE MARITIME SECTOR AND, INTERNATIONALLY, IT REFLECTS RIOS' BID FOR EUROPEAN SUPPORT, PICKING UP ON A RECENT OFFER BY ICFTU LEADER ENZO FISO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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(SANTIAGO 2639). FRISO HAD STRESSED THE DESIRABILITY FROM THE EUROPEAN LABOR POINT OF VIEW OF CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE "GROUP OF TEN" AND ELECTED LABOR LEADERS ON THE LEFT. RIOS HAS NOTED IN PRIVATE THAT LOGICALLY HIS NEW CONFEDERATION WILL HAVE TO BE OPEN TO COMMUNISTS, SOCIALISTS AND GOC SUPPORTING UNIONS WHICH ARE FREELY ELECTED AND WHICH ACCEPT DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION PRINCIPLES. HE RECOGNIZES THAT THIS MAY CREATE PROBLEMS FOR HIM AND THIS NEW ORGANIZATION HERE AND IN THE US BUT THAT IT IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO GET SUPPORT FROM EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC LABOR. HE STRESSED THAT HIS IDEA IS NOT TO COOPERATE WITH COMMUNISTS BUT SIMPLY TO ACCEPT HELP FROM WHATEVER QUARTER AVAILABLE IN HIS FIGHT FOR A RAPID RETURN TO TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY.

9. THE MAY DAY PETITION SIGNED BY THE "DINAMICOS" AND OTHER TRADE UNIONISTS, INCLUDING COMMUNISTS IS A PROPAGANDA EFFORT TO SHOW THAT THE GOC DIRECTED MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS AT DIEGO PORTALES DO NOT REPRESENT THE CHILEAN WORKER. THE GOC HAS CONSISTENTLY REFUSED TO PERMIT THE AUTHENTIC TRADE UNIONS TO ORGANIZE THEIR OWN MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS. THE SAME NEGATIVE DECISION IS LIKELY THIS YEAR. LANDAU

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